



Envision Arlington Fiscal Resources Task Group
Meeting Minutes
7:30 PM 9/21/23
Town Hall Annex First Floor

ATTENDEES: Gordon Jamieson (Co-Chair), David Garborino (Co-Chair), Heather Remoff, Jonathan Haughton, Mike De Lisi, Pete Howard (Secretary)

1. General discussion.
2. Jonathan has updated the Town Government Primer available on the Town website.
3. MBTA Communities: State Law requires all towns served by the MBTA to provide a minimum area of zoning to permit more dense housing by right. A working group was soliciting public input. Gordon noted that this group (FRTG) submitted individual suggestions on where and how much zoning change there should be at the last meeting. He described the working group's subsequent initial proposal as broad. He also described the working group's current detailed proposal to the ARB as similarly broad. The ARB's recommendation to Town Meeting will be available soon.
4. Town Day 9/23/23 10:00 to 3:00: Envision Arlington plans to have the usual booth to explain what the various task groups do and to solicit membership. He will provide handouts & a poster
Gordon worked out a schedule for us to represent the FRTG:

Added post event: Gordon, David, Jonathan and Heather enjoyed meeting residents and discussing the work of the FRTG during Town day.

5. New Growth: This has been a subject of FRTG study and advocacy for several years. We believe that if the Town used a less conservative estimate, the structural deficit would disappear and so would the need for overrides. Mike provided a report (see Ref) that shows, based on state and town on line records over more than 10 years, that new growth is at least 8% larger than the prediction used for budgeting. Furthermore new growth is mostly in utilities rather than in residential property that is far bigger. He makes the logical conclusion that value of property improvements as stated in the building permits does not capture actual value and thus the assessments are too low. Gordon described a procedure that could be carried out by assessor staff that over time could correct the individual property records so that the full scale 10 year reassessment would capture the true value.

6. The next meeting will be 10/19/23 in the Town Hall Annex First Floor Adjourned 9:10 PM

Ref: Mike De Lisi, New Growth

Mike De Lisi <michael.s.delisi@gmail.com>
To: gordon@transrx-inc.com

Mon, Sep 18, 2023 at 12:49 PM

Thanks Gordon. I'm going to try to make this meeting to discuss what we can do to help make sure the Town fully captures the New Growth expected from MBTA-C zoning overlay.

Our 10 year history is that Residential New Growth only comprises an average of 87% of New Growth (1) despite comprising 94.5% Percentage Share (2) of our tax base.

11% of our new growth last year came from an increase in Personal Property (2) even though Personal Property is only 1.4% percentage share (2) of our tax base. The majority of Personal Property is from utilities under codes 504, 505, 506, 508 (3). This trend of Personal Property producing an over-represented disproportionate share of New Growth, and Residential producing an under-represented share of New Growth is consistent with historical information from annual reports (4). FY23 was not an outlier.

How can we ensure the Town accurately calculates the residential New Growth from the redevelopment enabled by MBTA-C so that the increased cost of services do not blow a hole through the Town's budget, leading to larger, more frequent overrides?

References:

- (1) https://dls.gateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NewGrowth.NewGrowth_dash_v2_test
- (2) <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/63175/638054908629370000> (Pages 2, 8, and 9)
- (3) <https://www.mass.gov/doc/property-type-classification-codes-non-arms-length-codes-and-sales-report-spreadsheet/download> (Page 7)
- (4) <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/finance/assessor/tax-information>